

The NICHD Connection

August 2017

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Interesting Opportunity: Lilly National Conferences

By Quira Zeidan, PhD

INTERESTING
★★★
Opportunity

This June, I attended the 2017 Lilly National Conference in Bethesda, Maryland. The Lilly National Conference is an evidence-based teaching and learning meeting for college and university professors from across the United States. I have been passionate about science education from the beginning of my scientific career, and I welcomed with excitement an opportunity to participate in a national conference on higher education. This year's meeting was focused on effective classroom strategies to enrich student learning. The experience was very rewarding, as the conference encouraged me to reflect on the need to develop new teaching approaches, or improve existing ones, by modeling case studies with proven positive learning outcomes.

The conference was organized into daily plenary presentations followed by several concurrent sessions. The plenary presentations touched on four major subjects:

1. Dynamic lecturing
2. Transparency in teaching and learning
3. The classroom as practice
4. The improvement of academic integrity

I was particularly interested in the topic of dynamic lecturing, which explores how to introduce periods of active learning into lectures to effectively increase student retention. The research behind dynamic lecturing demonstrates that lecturing (the passive delivery of information from an expert to an audience) is the best method to facilitate learning in specific situations, such as when teaching novice students, when wanting to activate prior knowledge, when attempting to capture attention fast, or when emphasizing critical concepts. In these situations, lecturing is more effective when it includes moments of active learning. For example the lecturer can:

- » Question students to evoke critical thinking
- » Provide time to reflect on and process information
- » Elaborate through real-life examples and case studies
- » Use available technology

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Letter from the Editor

Ah, August. The month when a good chunk of Europe goes on holiday and children eke out the last few weeks of summer sun. For NICHD fellows, this month marks a farewell to our brilliant summer interns, a welcome to new fellows, and more work to the Metro red line—but that seems like every month, I suppose.

We open this issue with an [informative recap of the Lilly National Conference](#) that took place this summer in Bethesda. The Lilly National Conferences are a series of nationwide, multi-day meetings dedicated to evidence-based teaching and learning. The NICHD Office of Education sponsors a handful of NICHD fellows who would like to attend the event. Postdoctoral fellow Dr. Quira Zeidan reports on her experience attending the conference for our feature article this month.

For those fellows who are on the path to med school, [two former NICHD postbacs](#) talk about preparing for the Medical College Admission Test, lovingly known as the MCAT. They offer firsthand experience regarding methods that worked for them—yes, both performed well, and they are now starting medical school this Fall. If the MCAT is in your future, reading about successful prep strategies is a great place to start.

A few more notes before you dig into this issue. First, please join us in offering a [warm welcome to our new clinical fellows](#), who no doubt will make great strides in the areas of endocrinology, reproduction, and fertility. Second, check out our [“Rep Report”](#) and the [August Announcements](#) for opportunities to serve on the NIH-wide Fellows Committee (FelCom) and the NICHD-specific Fellows Advisory Committee, respectively. And third, if you see Dr. Arup Chakraborty from the DePamphilis lab, give him a big pat on the back. He [earned third place](#) among all of the 2017 Three-minute-Talk (TmT) speakers at the annual TmT competition.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Your Editor in Chief,
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

Do you have comments, questions, or ideas for the newsletter? You know what to do. Contact our editor at Shana.Spindler@gmail.com.

Lilly National Conferences

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Following the plenary each day, concurrent sessions were organized as either short talks or group discussions, led by experts on specific areas of education. The sessions covered a wide variety of subjects, including engaging minority students in STEM, designing collaborative learning strategies, using advanced technology and multi-media as pedagogical tools, cultivating student resilience, and integrating mindfulness into the classroom.

I was pleased to find that in addition to focusing on traditional education areas such as content delivery and student cognition, leaders of colleges and universities around the country are also becoming aware of the social, economic, cultural, and environmental challenges faced by adult learners of the 21st century. Professors at institutions of higher learning are taking the necessary steps to incorporate concepts and trends of the current era into the curriculum and the overall academic experience, to connect with students and provide a learning environment attuned with the current state of global education.


The session that had the most profound impact on me as an emerging science educator was entitled “Full STEAM ahead, all aboard,” which described the efforts to incorporate art into Anatomy and Physiology lesson plans for health science students. Using artistic hands-on activities, such as sculpting organs with clay, creating impressionistic-style prints from tissue slides, and building bionic structures using 3D printers, allowed professors to engage visual and kinesthetic learners who often find abstract science concepts challenging. For the time it has been implemented, this innovative approach has enabled students to acquire deep, long-lasting understanding of body systems and their functioning, as shown by positive assessment results. This session inspired me to develop a strong interest in creating novel ways to merge art, technology, and science to design more meaningful biology courses and to support general scientific content.

My experience at the Lilly Conference has provided me with valuable tools to develop my career as a science educator, and I am very thankful to the NICHD Office of Education for sponsoring my registration, to Dr. Yvette Pittman and Ms. Carol Carnahan for helping with the application, and to my postdoctoral mentor Dr. Alan Hinnebusch for supporting my participation in this event.

Editor's note: Please contact Dr. Yvette Pittman at yvette.pittman@nih.gov to learn about future Lilly conference meetings or other workshop opportunities.

Thoughts of a Postbac: MCAT Preparation

The NICHD Office of Education receives a lot of questions from incoming postbacs about preparation for the [Medical College Admission Test](#) (MCAT). *The NICHD Connection* is happy to make a small contribution to the answer pool. Two NICHD postbacs who recently left for medical school have shared their different experiences and approaches to studying for the daunting exam.

Thoughts of a

Postbac

Rim Mehari, former postbac in the Yanovski lab
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL SCHOOL OF
MEDICINE, CLASS OF 2021



Rim Mehari

I prepared for the MCAT using the [Princeton Review](#). I took a live, online course four nights a week for about two months, and I studied an additional month on my own. I appreciated having the structure of a class without having to go far for an in-person class. The instructors had a good balance among test taking strategies, practice passages, and content review. Moreover, you have access to a lot of practice material and full-length exams. If you don't have financial resources to pay for the class, the Princeton Review does offer a form of financial aid. You can contact one of their representatives who will be able to send you a form you will have to fill out in addition to writing an essay about why you need financial assistance. You may have to submit a document, like a financial aid letter from your previous school or a loan deferment application, in order to demonstrate your financial need.

I would highly recommend taking a course of some sort because the amount of material you have to cover could be overwhelming. A live-course gives you focus, accountability, and structure. The challenge was being able to fit a three-hour course at the end of a workday. If I could do it differently, I would recommend finding a class schedule that budgets a maximum of two hours of studying per weeknight. If you are studying on your own, use weeknights to focus on practice passages or one section of a full exam. For me, weekends were when I had the mental capacity to absorb new information, so I reserved weekends for reviewing content I was struggling with. Whatever your study strategy may be, make sure to manage your time wisely, pay attention to areas of weaknesses, adapt your strategies to improve on such weaknesses, gets lots of practice, and don't forget to take care of yourself and your wellbeing! Best of luck!

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Thoughts of a Postbac: MCAT Preparation

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Nicolas Johnson, postbac in the Lilly lab

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, CLASS OF 2021



Nicolas Johnson

One of the biggest things I learned from my experience preparing for the MCAT is the importance of doing practice questions and practice exams. I realized that knowledge about MCAT content isn't really effective until it is applied through questions. Once I did enough questions and exams, it became easier to see the pattern between subjects that were most important. To cover content for the MCAT, I used books from [Kaplan](#) and the [Khan Academy](#) website (a free resource that has very informative videos and practice questions for various concepts). If I could go back and give myself advice it would be to RELAX and believe in yourself. Make sure to take care of yourself during your studies. You perform at your best when you are the best version of yourself!

Editor's Note: The Association of American Medical Colleges offers official MCAT practice exams that can be purchased on [their website](#).

The Rep Report

By Suna Gulay, PhD



As the current NICHD Basic Sciences Representative, I represent NICHD postdoctoral fellows at the FelCom meeting every month. Do you have a concern or question that you want brought up at the next meeting? Contact me at suna.gulay@nih.gov!

End of summer marks new training opportunities. For those of you interested in serving at FelCom, the Career Development, FARE, and Mentoring subcommittees are looking for new members. Please contact subcommittee chairs directly to learn more.

Career Development Committee	Qiong Fu & Hetal Pandya
FARE Committee	John Gallagher & Pushpanathan Muthuirulan
Mentoring Committee	Gloria Laryea & Jennifer West



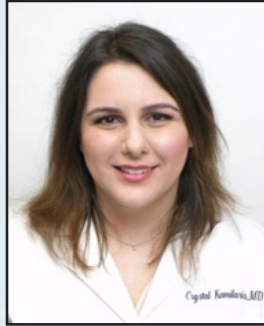
A Warm Welcome to Our 2017 Incoming Clinical Fellows

The NICHD Connection would like to introduce our newest clinical fellows. Welcome to the family!

INTER-INSTITUTE ENDOCRINOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM



DR. IRIS HARTLEY
Residency: University of
Maryland Medical Center



DR. CRYSTAL KAMILARIS
Residency: University of
Connecticut

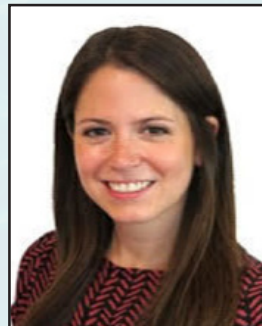
PEDIATRIC ENDOCRINOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM



DR. MARIA ZHADINA
Residency: Cohen
Children's Medical Center
at Northwell Health



DR. ABBY MYERS
Residency: Children's
National Medical Center



DR. REBECCA PERSKY
Residency: Children's
Hospital of Philadelphia

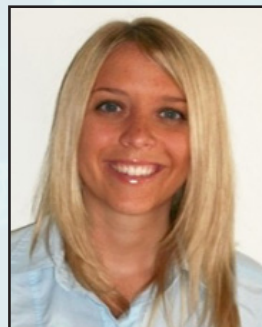
REPRODUCTIVE ENDOCRINOLOGY AND INFERTILITY TRAINING PROGRAM



DR. JESSICA ZOLTON
Residency: Summa
Akron City Hospital



DR. BLAKE EVANS
Residency: Oklahoma
State University Medical
Center



DR. LAUREN BISHOP
Residency:
Georgetown University
Hospital/Washington
Hospital Center

August Announcements

NICHD POSTDOC DR. ARUP CHAKRABORTY PLACES THIRD IN TmT COMPETITION

During the fourth annual Three-minute-Talk (TmT) competition on June 29, thirteen intramural postdoctoral fellows and graduate students from NICHD, NHGRI, and NIDCR competed to be the first-, second-, or third-place winners. The NICHD finalists and top three winners will receive travel/training support and their talks will be professionally produced for a video clip.

Our very own Dr. Arup Chakraborty, a postdoctoral fellow in the DePamphilis lab, impressed the judges with his research talk. His wonderful presentation and clear slide earned him third place among all of the 2017 TmT speakers.

Congratulations to Dr. Chakraborty and to all of our NICHD TmT finalists:

- » Miranda Broadney (Clinical Fellow, Yanovski)
- » Afrouz Anderson (Postdoc, Gandjbakhche)
- » Neda Sadeghi (Postdoc, Basser)
- » Hadis Dashtestani (Graduate Student, Gandjbakhche)

You all did an awesome job!

THE 2018 FELLOWS RETREAT PLANNING: AN OPPORTUNITY AWAITS!

You are invited to serve on the Steering Committee for planning the 14th Annual Meeting for postdoctoral, clinical, and visiting fellows and graduate students. Please send a quick note to Dr. Yvette Pittman (yvette.pittman@nih.gov), NICHD Office of Education, to express your interest.

The group builds the program for the meeting, invites speakers, reviews abstracts, selects fellow/student presenters, and moderates some of the sessions, among other responsibilities. It's a great opportunity to sharpen your soft skills while working in a team to plan this annual spring event!

We hope to start our monthly, one-hour meetings in October.

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Dr. Chakraborty at the TmT Competition

PHOTO BY JEREMY SWAN



August Announcements

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NICHD FELLOWS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: SEEKING NEW MEMBERS!

The Office of Education formed an advisory committee in 2016, and we are seeking several more dedicated members to help us develop and initiate academic support programs for the institute. Both domestic and visiting fellows are needed. We want to achieve a broad representation, culturally and academically, so we can address the needs of all our trainees at NICHD. The committee meets monthly to exchange ideas and informally discuss ways we can enhance and tailor the training experience within the NICHD intramural program.

Some potential topics for our committee are how to:

- » Increase the participation for training activities
- » Expose fellows to various careers in science
- » Identify teaching opportunities and internal and external research funding mechanisms
- » Establish a structure for sharing scientific and career resources within the institute

The committee meets once a month on Thursdays, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Our Fall dates are listed below:

- » September 14
- » October 12
- » November 9
- » December 7

Please contact Dr. Yvette Pittman at yvette.pittman@nih.gov if you are interested in joining the group.

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August Announcements

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SAVE THE DATE: NICHD DIR SCIENTIFIC RETREAT

Monday, September 25, 8:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Lipsett Auditorium and adjacent FAES Terrace

Please mark your calendars for the NICHD DIR Scientific Retreat. We strongly encourage all intramural researchers—PIs and lab members—to attend as we celebrate our achievements and spark new collaborations.

The retreat will be held on a single day, starting at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 7 p.m. Apart from an exciting line-up of talks, every lab will have the chance to present at least one poster.

Showcase your work for the 2nd annual NICHD intramural image competition: DIR is looking for scientific images that represent an interesting piece of data in an aesthetically pleasing way. All entrants will be displayed during the retreat poster session, and the top five will each have two minutes to explain the science behind the image during the retreat. In addition, the image judged as best will win a prize. So be on the lookout for a captivating image to submit.

Details for online poster registration, and instructions on how to submit to the image competition will be forthcoming, along with the finalized agenda.

Please plan to step away from your labs and join us for what is shaping up to be an exciting retreat!

SAVE THE DATE: NICHD POSTBAC ORIENTATION SESSION & PIZZA LUNCH

Wednesday, September 27, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
Building 31, room 2A48

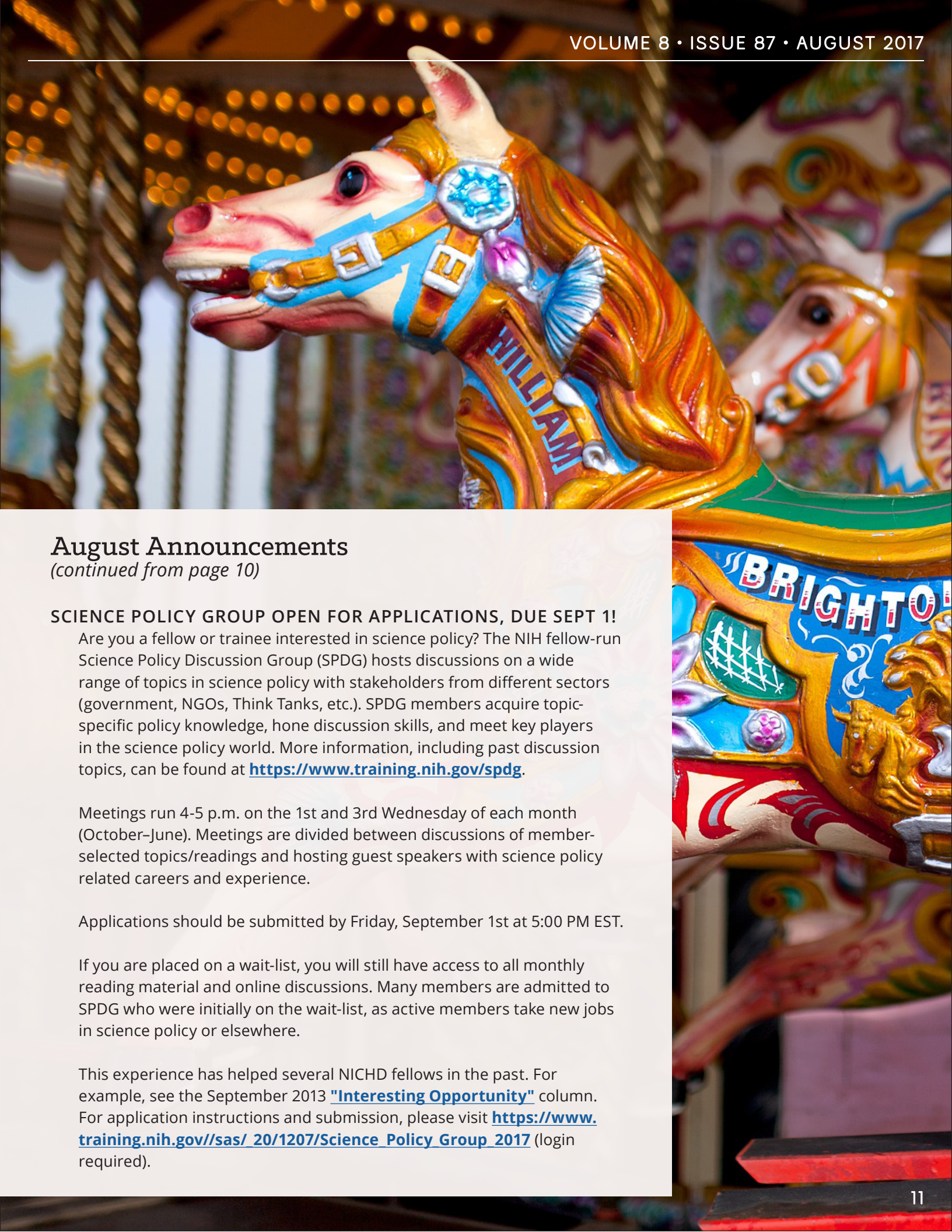
Our institute has approximately 50 postbacs conducting both clinical and basic science research. We would like to bring our postbacs together to meet each other and introduce the volunteer and training opportunities on campus. Learn about:

- » ICU simulator rounds
- » The annual postbac course
- » Genetics clinic shadowing
- » Children's Inn volunteer opportunities
- » And more!

The NICHD Office of Education aims to enrich fellows' NIH experience with career development, outreach, and social activities. If you would like to attend this informational event, please contact Dr. Yvette Pittman at yvette.pittman@nih.gov.

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August Announcements

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SCIENCE POLICY GROUP OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS, DUE SEPT 1!

Are you a fellow or trainee interested in science policy? The NIH fellow-run Science Policy Discussion Group (SPDG) hosts discussions on a wide range of topics in science policy with stakeholders from different sectors (government, NGOs, Think Tanks, etc.). SPDG members acquire topic-specific policy knowledge, hone discussion skills, and meet key players in the science policy world. More information, including past discussion topics, can be found at <https://www.training.nih.gov/spdg>.

Meetings run 4-5 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month (October–June). Meetings are divided between discussions of member-selected topics/readings and hosting guest speakers with science policy related careers and experience.

Applications should be submitted by Friday, September 1st at 5:00 PM EST.

If you are placed on a wait-list, you will still have access to all monthly reading material and online discussions. Many members are admitted to SPDG who were initially on the wait-list, as active members take new jobs in science policy or elsewhere.

This experience has helped several NICHD fellows in the past. For example, see the September 2013 "[Interesting Opportunity](#)" column. For application instructions and submission, please visit [https://www.training.nih.gov/sas/20/1207/Science Policy Group 2017](https://www.training.nih.gov/sas/20/1207/Science_Policy_Group_2017) (login required).

August Events

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 9 AM – 3 PM

NIH Summer Poster Day

Natcher Conference Center (Building 45)

More information can be found at https://www.training.nih.gov/summer_poster_day

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2 – 4 PM

“Speaking about Science: Giving Scientific Talks”

With Scott Morgan

“Speaking about Science” is highly interactive, and the core of this workshop is a nine-step preparation process that ensures a clear and engaging talk for a variety of audiences. Learn strategies for improving your delivery of lab talks or giving presentations at big meetings.

Topics include: presenting data, identifying theme and focus, creating effective visual aids, and beginning and ending a talk. Participants in this program will also have the opportunity to schedule an individual one-hour coaching sessions later on, when you have a presentation scheduled and want to practice your talk.

Open to 25 fellows, please sign up with Dr. Yvette Pittman, yvette.pittman@nih.gov.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 12 – 1 PM

Lunchtime Career Session: Applying for Academic Jobs and the Interviewing Process

Are you going on the job market for a faculty position soon and would like to know what the interview is really like and how to prepare for it?

The Office of Education will offer a brown bag lunch session with a senior fellow and two new tenure-track investigators who recently completed several interviews for faculty positions at both research-intensive and teaching colleges and universities.

This is a great opportunity, in an informal, small-group forum, for you to hear firsthand some application tips and what to expect during the interview process. We want you to walk away from the discussion with a sense of what search committees are interested in, the type of questions that are asked, tips for both phone and in-person interviews, what skills are most needed to be successful, and what you can do throughout your NIH training to be more prepared.

If you would like to register, please email Dr. Yvette Pittman at yvette.pittman@nih.gov. *There are only 25 slots for NICHD fellows.*

PHD Comics



<http://phdcomics.com/comics/archive.php?comid=1967>

